

to get this amount of money, cutting out the taxes, and then I can spend it on this. We do just the opposite. We decide how to spend money, oh, and then we'll just get the money. We'll tax it or go into debt. Uncle Sam needs to budget like other Americans.

These are some considerations and some New Year's resolutions for Uncle Sam. I hope we impose a few of those. I think it's time we stop the credit card government.

And that's just the way it is.

IN RECOGNITION OF SENATOR MITCH MCCONNELL'S YEARS OF SERVICE IN SENATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. CHANDLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the now longest-serving Kentucky Senator in the history of the United States Senate. This is truly a historic milestone for both the Commonwealth of Kentucky and Senator MITCH MCCONNELL.

Recently, Senator MCCONNELL celebrated 25 years in the United States Senate, surpassing the great Senator Wendell Ford's previous record. By no means is this a small accomplishment, as our State has been the home to such noted Members of the Senate as Henry Clay, John J. Crittenden, Alben Barkley, and John Sherman Cooper, just to name a few.

The Senator did not become the influential man that he is today without hard work, dedication, and determination. He started his career as an intern on Capitol Hill, moved to legislative assistant, eventually deputy assistant attorney general under President Ford, to County Judge-Executive in Jefferson County, the largest county in our State, all before being elected by the people of Kentucky to serve in the United States Senate in 1984.

He led his classmates as student body president in college and then went on to be the president of the Student Bar Association in law school. He has garnered the respect of his peers for years; so it comes as no surprise that he has risen to be the leader of his party in the Senate, an accomplishment only one other Kentuckian in history has ever achieved.

Parties aside, Senator MCCONNELL has fought for what he believes in with the same dedication and fervor as he did when fighting polio in his early childhood. He can point to a number of achievements, such as aiding struggling Kentucky tobacco farmers by orchestrating the tobacco buyout and providing significant aid to Kentucky's colleges and universities. His influence also extends outside the Congress and the Commonwealth with his work on the Appropriations, Agriculture, and Rules Committees, opposing dictators in Myanmar and fighting for human rights in Egypt and Cambodia among others. Like Senator Wendell Ford,

Senator MCCONNELL won his first statewide election by a small margin, but since that time he has become a mainstay in Kentucky.

Senator MCCONNELL and I are both students of history, and regardless of political differences, and we have a few of those, I believe it's important to recognize his truly outstanding achievements.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask the House to join me in recognizing the accomplishments of the distinguished gentleman from Kentucky, Senator MITCH MCCONNELL.

STATEMENT ON A PRESIDENTIAL COMMUTATION FOR FORMER U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENTS RAMOS AND COMPEAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, before President Bush leaves office next week, he has the power to correct a terrible injustice.

Over the past 2 years, Members of Congress have written to the President, as a group and individually, asking him to commute the sentences of imprisoned U.S. Border Patrol Agents Ramos and Compean.

It is well known that these border agents were convicted and sentenced to 11 and 12 years in prison for shooting and wounding a Mexican drug smuggler who brought \$1 million worth of marijuana across the U.S. border in 2005. This Saturday, January 17 of 2009, will mark the beginning of the agents' 3rd year in Federal prison.

On November 24, 2008, President Bush granted 14 pardons and two commutations. Clemency was granted to individuals convicted of crimes such as drug conspiracy, tax evasion, poisoning bald eagles, dumping hazardous waste, bank embezzlement, and theft of government property.

On December 22, 2008, the President issued 19 additional pardons and one commutation. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Ramos and Compean have not made the list.

With the help of Lou Dobbs and countless other news outlets, Americans across this Nation have learned of the unjust prosecution of these two men who were doing their job to protect our border. Since the agents' convictions, the White House has received thousands of phone calls from outraged citizens and letters sent by Members of Congress on both sides of the political aisle.

On November 20 of 2008, I joined Congressman BILL DELAHUNT, DANA ROHRABACHER, and others in a letter to pardon Attorney Ronald Rogers, which outlined the reasons for our request. And most recently on December 11, 2008, I wrote the President that he commute the agents' sentences before they have to spend another Christmas in Federal prison, and, Mr. Speaker, I submit the letter for the RECORD.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 11, 2008.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I am writing to express my deep disappointment that the 14 pardons and two commutations you granted on November 24, 2008, did not include commutations for imprisoned U.S. Border Patrol agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Alonso Compean. Instead, clemency was granted to those convicted of crimes such as drug conspiracy, tax evasion, poisoning bald eagles, dumping hazardous waste, bank embezzlement and theft of government property.

Mr. President, this week I opened a Christmas card which pictured two beautiful families with three children each. I was deeply saddened when I realized these were photos of the Ramos and Compean families—who will face another Christmas with husbands and fathers locked away in federal prison if you fail to intervene on their behalf. Knowing that it has become customary during the final days of a president's term to grant pardons and commutations in criminal cases, I urge you to take the time to personally review the prosecution of agents Ramos and Compean. I am confident the facts of their case will lead you to the same conclusion countless American citizens have already reached: there are no individuals more worthy of presidential commutations than agents Ramos and Compean. The facts of the case will show—as Judge E. Grady Jolly stated on December 3, 2007, during the agents' appeal—"the government overreacted here * * * for some reason, this one got out of hand." By attempting to apprehend an illegal alien drug smuggler, agents Ramos and Compean were enforcing our laws—not breaking them. Simply put, the indictments against these men were unjustified.

As countless Americans and many in Congress have brought to your attention over the past two years, agents Ramos and Compean were convicted and sentenced to 11 and 12 years respectively for shooting and wounding a Mexican drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across the U.S. border in 2005. Both men entered prison on January 17, 2007, and have served nearly two years of their sentences. Since the agents' convictions, your office has received thousands of phone calls from concerned citizens and numerous letters from members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. Most recently, on November 13, 2008, I wrote a letter urging you to commute the agents' sentences to time served. On November 20, 2008, I also joined Congressmen Bill Delahunt, Dana Rohrabacher and others in a letter to Pardon Attorney Ronald Rodgers which outlined the rationale for this request.

Many disturbing details of the Ramos and Compean case have garnered national attention and raised serious concerns over the lack of fairness in the proceedings against these two men—including the prosecution's efforts to seek out and offer immunity to a habitual Mexican drug smuggler, a sealed indictment of the smuggler's subsequent drug offenses and insufficient proof of whether or not the smuggler was unarmed, as he claimed at trial. All of these factors strongly call into question whether justice was served.

Among the most serious matters warranting your consideration is the U.S. Attorney's decision to charge Ramos and Compean with violations of 18 U.S.C. §924(c)—which pertains to the use of a firearm during and in relation to the commission of a crime of violence and carries a mandatory 10-year sentence. Any failure by the agents to report